

RESEARCH INSIGHTS IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING

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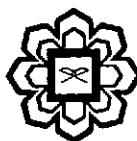
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	v
CHAPTER 1:.....	1
Minimising Students' Communication Apprehension: The Application of Groupwork Learning Strategy in English Classrooms	
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	2
PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	5
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	5
METHODOLOGY	6
FINDINGS.....	8
DISCUSSION	13
CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH	14
REFERENCES.....	16
APPENDIX A	19
APPENDIX B	21
CHAPTER 2:.....	23
Communication Anxiety Among Pre-University Students	
INTRODUCTION	24
PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	25
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	25
METHODOLOGY	26
FINDINGS.....	28
DISCUSSION.....	32
CONCLUSION.....	33
REFERENCES.....	34
CHAPTER 3:.....	37
An Analysis of Online English Language Learning Forum	
INTRODUCTION	37
LITERATURE REVIEW	38
METHODOLOGY	41
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	41
DISCUSSION.....	46
CONCLUSION.....	47
REFERENCES.....	48

CHAPTER 4:	.....	49
The Effects of Oral Communication Strategy Training on ESL Learners' Oral Proficiency		
INTRODUCTION .....	.....	49
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE .....	.....	51
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	.....	51
METHODOLOGY .....	.....	54
FINDINGS.....	.....	58
CONCLUSION.....	.....	64
REFERENCES.....	.....	66
CHAPTER 5:	.....	71
Responses to Extensive Reading: A Survey of ESL Learners		
INTRODUCTION .....	.....	71
BACKGROUND .....	.....	73
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	.....	74
METHODOLOGY .....	.....	75
FINDINGS.....	.....	76
DISCUSSION .....	.....	81
CONCLUSION.....	.....	84
REFERENCES.....	.....	85
CHAPTER 6:	.....	89
The Use of Metacognitive Strategies in Listening		
INTRODUCTION .....	.....	89
LITFRATURE REVIEW .....	.....	91
METHODOLOGY .....	.....	94
RESULTS.....	.....	95
DISCUSSION.....	.....	98
CONCLUSION.....	.....	100
REFERENCES.....	.....	102
CHAPTER 7:	.....	105
Managing English for Academic Writing Using Learning Management System		
INTRODUCTION .....	.....	105
LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) .....	.....	107
BACKGROUND .....	.....	108
PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	.....	109
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE .....	.....	110
METHODOLOGY .....	.....	110
FINDINGS .....	.....	111
DISCUSSION .....	.....	111
CONCLUSION .....	.....	118
REFERENCES.....	.....	119

CHAPTER 8:.....	121
Teaching English in Multicultural Classrooms	
INTRODUCTION	121
PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	122
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	123
LITERATURE REVIEW	123
METHODOLOGY.....	125
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	126
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	136
REFERENCES.....	138
CHAPTER 9:.....	141
Task Based Learning: From Theory to Practice	
INTRODUCTION	141
TASK BASED LEARNING	142
PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	145
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	146
METHODOLOGY.....	147
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	151
CONCLUSION.....	154
REFERENCES.....	156
CHAPTER 10:	159
Incorporating Field Trip Activities in EOP	
INTRODUCTION	159
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	164
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	165
METHODOLOGY	165
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	166
CONCLUSION.....	170
REFERENCES	171
CONTRIBUTORS	175
INDEX	179

CHAPTER 3:

An Analysis of Online English Language Learning Forum

ROZIANA MOHAMED ROSLI

FARIDAH ABDUL MALIK

Language teaching is becoming more dynamic and vibrant as technology is exploited more appropriately in language education. One popular application of technology is the online forum (OLF) which has opened up a new venue for students to express themselves frequently in language courses. The OLF has also made the students' essay writing tasks more meaningful as they can exchange ideas in productive discussions in addition to improving their linguistic competence. This study examined the contribution of OLF in enhancing students' English language skills. Specifically, it investigated the effects of OLF on pre-university ESL students' language and communication skills and the ways in which OLF could improve the students' vocabulary, language structures and expressions. The students' reactions to the cross-cultural elements they encountered when participating in OLF were also explored. The findings indicate that students found OLF an interesting alternative to normal classroom writing, while at the same time improving their language and communication skills and fostering better understanding of their multi-ethnic peers.

Keywords: online forum (OLF), writing skills, communication skills, cultural differences

INTRODUCTION

The citizens of today's increasingly borderless world spend much of their waking hours clicking away on the keypads of an assortment of gadgets with an Internet